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## IV. EXPERIMENTAL ROAD WORK IN OHIO

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The Ohio Highway Department employed convicts during the summer of 1912 in the construction of an experimental road, south of the City of Columbus. The convicts were taken each day from the penitentiary to and from the work in a motor truck operated by a convict. The distance from the penitentiary to the work was about seven miles. After taking the convicts to the work in the morning the truck returned to the penitentiary for other duties during the day, returning again to the work to take the men home in the evening.

The convicts were all colored men, and the number working each day varied from seventeen to twenty-five. One guard, unarmed, accompanied the convicts. There was no effort on the part of the men to escape, even though they were sometimes scattered along the road for a distance of half a mile.

From the fact that the road that was constructed was an experimental road and the type of construction frequently changed, it was necessary frequently to change the occupation of the men. Some difficulty was experienced with the class of men that were being worked when these changes came too frequently, and where the occupation of the men was changed several times the same day their work was not always satisfactory. However, where we could keep the men employed at the same class of work for several days in succession, satisfactory results were secured.

For the services of the convicts \$1.00 per day was paid to the board of administration, the board that has charge of the various penal and correctional institutions of the state. No part of this pay went to the credit of the convicts. There is now a movement on foot which has for its object the enactment of a law providing for paying the convicts, or applying to their credit, the sum of fifty cents per day for their services.

Although the small amount of road work done by convicts in

the state might be said to be experimental, yet enough has been done to prove that good results can be had in building a road where the type of construction does not frequently change. It is also believed that if even a small wage be paid the convict, or placed to his credit, still better results will be secured with a more humanizing effect upon the convict.